



## **Chickahominy Reservoir Fisheries Management Report 2004**



This is a 1230-acre water supply reservoir located along the New Kent-Charles City county line. The low-head dam of this reservoir (known locally as Walkers Dam) was completed in 1943 and incorporates twin Denil fish ladders to allow for the passage of anadromous fish such as blueback herring and striped bass.

This cypress-laden lake provides a spectacular backdrop for photographers, and is also great for bird watchers. In addition, it just happens to be one of the best all round fisheries in Virginia. The Chick's forage base is mainly gizzard shad and blueback herring. The cypress trees, water lilies and submerged aquatic vegetation provide excellent habitats for aquatic organisms and are undoubtedly one of the reasons for the consistently good fishing at this lake over the years.

The fish population was sampled in May using an electrofishing boat. Electrodes are used to apply a small electric current to the water around the front of the boat. Any fish that are present in the electric field are momentarily stunned, thus allowing them to be captured by hand nets. After taking length and weight measurements the fish are released. If necessary, a small sample is kept for age and growth analysis.

The largemouth bass fishing at this lake has been consistently good over many years. The results of the 2003 survey show that the largemouth bass population is in good shape overall. Structural indices were in line with that expected for a balanced fishery. Physical examination of the fish showed them to be in good condition and this was supported by an index of relative weight. The largest fish caught was 21 inches in length and weighed 4.75 lbs. The data compares favorably with the results of the previous survey conducted in 2000, with the main difference being a slight reduction in the proportion of larger bass (those greater than 12 inches in length) and an increase in the number of younger fish (those less than 8 inches in length).

Bluegill were very abundant, especially those under 6 inches in length. Having said that, the catch rate (number of fish caught per hour of sampling) for larger fish (6 to 8 inches in length) was relatively good and considerably higher than that recorded during the 2000 survey.

Our sampling indicates that the redear sunfish population is abundant with good catch rates for fish in the 7 to 9 inch size range; however, we did not catch any fish greater than 9 inches in length.

The black crappie population was in decent shape, with the largest fish topping out at about 14 inches. The population size structure was similar to that of the previous survey (2000), but the condition of the fish was better.

The Department's Angler Recognition Program issued a total of 90 trophy fish citations for this reservoir in 2003 putting it in 14<sup>th</sup> place in the list of top 25 waters in the state. It ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in the state for chain pickerel and bowfin, 4<sup>th</sup> in the state for largemouth bass and black crappie, 5<sup>th</sup> for yellow perch, and 7<sup>th</sup> for gar.

Angling enthusiasts will enjoy the fact that this is a diverse fishery. Chain pickerel, bowfin, gar and carp are present in sufficient numbers and size to provide an alternative quarry. In fact, bowfin dominated the sample in terms of biomass (total weight). The largest bowfin in our sample was 26 inches long and weighed 6 lbs. We also had carp up to 27 inches in length and weighing nearly 9 lbs.

Public access is available via several fee ramps where boats and other equipment can be rented.

For further information call the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries at 757- 253-4172 ([www.dgif.virginia.gov](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov)).